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Department of Transportation and Communications
PUNONGHIMPILAN TANOD BAYBAYIN NG PILIPINAS
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HPCG

STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES)

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PROCEDURES IN HANDLING SARS CASES ON BOARD VESSEL

I. REFERENCES:

1. Republic Act No. 123, "An Act Prescribing The Reorganization and Operation of The Bureau of Quarantine Service, and Promulgating Regulations thereof. "
2. PPA Memorandum Order no. 03-2003 dtd 30 Apr 2003, Contingency Plan on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

II. PURPOSE: To establish procedures in the handling of **Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)** cases on board vessels in port or anchorage and at sea.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. SARS - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome** – A typical pneumonia caused by an unknown strain of corona virus with signs and symptoms of dry cough, high grade fever, difficulty of breathing and x-ray findings of a typical pneumonia.
- B. Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ)** – an agency under the Department of Health, primarily responsible for quarantine activities.
- C. Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID)** – an agency under the Department of Foreign Affairs responsible for immigration and deportation of foreign nationals identified afflicted with SARS.
- D. Department of Health (DOH)** – an agency responsible for National Health in the prevention and treatment of SARS.

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- E. **Boarding Procedures** - a set of guidelines or protocol that guide maritime law enforcers in the safe approach and embarkation of a vessel to be boarded and inspected.
- F. **Port State Control (PSC)** – inspection of foreign-flagged ships calling at local ports to verify ships' compliance with international safety and labor standards.
- G. **Maritime Law Enforcement (MARLEN) Operations** – generally connotes the operations conducted by PCG personnel against violations of customs, immigration, quarantine, fishery, forestry, dangerous drugs, firearms, piracy, and environmental laws within the waters subject to the jurisdiction of the Philippines.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. General

- (1) Owners/agents of foreign ships calling Philippine ports shall be required to submit notice of arrival of the vessel at least 48 hours in advance. Likewise, the master of the vessel shall be required to submit the status of crew and passengers.
- (2) During MARLEN operations, maximum safety and precaution should be observed in dealing with vessel suspected of carrying persons infected with SARS. Boarding team preferably with medical team shall ensure the designation of isolation room for suspected SARS patient and coordinate with nearest BOQ office for further dispositive action through fastest available communications.

B. Vessel in Port or in Anchorage

- (1) Board the vessel during the conduct of PSC/MARLEN only when clearance has already been issued by the BOQ Medical Team. However, continue to observe safety precautionary measures against SARS.
- (2) Secure the quarantine area, if requested by BOQ or PPA.

C. Vessel Boarded at Sea During the Conduct of Maritime Patrols

- (1) In the case of vessels coming from affected countries, Boarding Team shall be accompanied by PCG Medical Team and shall wear the prescribed body protection and medical equipment against SARS.

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- (2) If a crewmember or passenger is suspected or found positive with SARS, the following listed guidelines in handling of SARS cases should be strictly followed.
- a. Inform nearest BOQ office through fastest available communications for further dispositive action.
 - b. Let the crew/passenger stay at his cabin for isolation and administration.
 - c. Provide an N95 face mask for the patient.
 - d. Avoid necessary contact with the patient
 - e. Notify immediately the port authorities of the port of destination.
 - f. Handle properly all contaminated clothing or other contaminated fomites with routine standard barrier precautions (use of mask, gloves, eye protection, gowns)
 - g. Wash thoroughly the hands after every handling of the patient.
 - h. Upon arrival of the vessel, the protocol for Arriving Vessels should be followed. BOQ should further assess the suspected passenger-patient for further dispositive action.

D. Safety

Safety of personnel and vessel/craft is paramount at all times.

V. RESCISSION:

All publication in conflict with this SOP are hereby rescinded.

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